
**TRANSPORTATION CONFORMITY WORKING GROUP
of the
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS**

**August 28, 2007
Minutes**

THE FOLLOWING MINUTES ARE A SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION CONFORMITY WORKING GROUP. AN AUDIOCASSETTE TAPE OF THE ACTUAL MEETING IS AVAILABLE FOR LISTENING IN SCAG'S OFFICE.

The Meeting of the Transportation Conformity Working Group was held at the SCAG office in Los Angeles.

In Attendance:

Abrishami, Lori	Metro
Alvarez, Grace	RCTC
Gutierrez, Jose	LA City-EAD
Lobeck, Ken	RCTC
McAllester, Brad	Metro
Mitchell, Miles	LA City-DOT
Poe, Lisa	SANBAG
Van Hagen, Tony	Caltrans District 7
Williams, Leann	Caltrans

SCAG Staff

Amatya, Naresh	
Asuncion, John	
Ayala, Rosemary	
Mann, Betty	
Nadler, Jonathan	
Sherwood, Arnie	SCAG, ITS UC Berkeley
Whiteaker, Warren	

Via Teleconference:

Adams, Cindy	Caltrans
Bechtel, Cathy	RCTC
Brady, Mike	Caltrans Headquarters
Cacatian, Ben	Ventura County
Devitas, Rodney	Caltrans Headquarters
Fagan, Paul	Caltrans District 8
Johnson, Sandy	Caltrans District 11
Jones, Matt	Mestre Greve Associates

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Knox, Michelle	FHWA
Lay, Keith	LSA& Associates
Louka, Tony	Caltrans District 8
Mazur, Jean	FHWA
Modrek, Laleh	Caltrans District 8
Wade, Dennis	ARB
Yoon, Andrew	Caltrans District 7

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

Jonathan Nadler, SCAG, called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

2.0 PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no comments.

3.0 CONSENT CALENDAR

3.1 Approval Item

3.1 TCWG July 24, 2007 Meeting Minutes

A MOTION was made to MOVE the minutes. The MOTION was SECONDED and UNANIMOUSLY approved.

4.0 INFORMATION ITEMS

4.1 RTP Update

Naresh Amatya, SCAG, stated that staff will bring the draft RTP to SCAG's Transportation & Communications Committee (TCC) on November 1 with a recommendation to release the draft for the public review and comment period.

Over the past months staff has updated the RTP project list based on information received from the CTC's. Staff has performed preliminary model runs for the base year and the 2035 horizon year. The different scenarios focus on projects that are committed in the CTC's long range

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plans and on using revenue backed projects or public/private financed projects. Staff is currently trying to assess conformity implications of the scenarios. Staff has also done preliminary baseline revenue forecasts based on the work completed to date. Staff estimates 240 billion dollars to be the revenue based on existing and available sources. Cost is also based on the operating and maintenance needs for the existing system. All the committed cost through the TIP and other funding mechanisms also comes close to 240 billion dollars. The RTP will look at other mechanisms of funding, including increasing the gas tax and public/private partnership to put forth additional projects in the plan.

SCAG will be holding five RTP workshops over the next few months. The first workshop is on August 30th at the Transportation & Communications Committee. The focus of the workshop will be Transportation Finance. The second workshop will be held on September 20th in Long Beach with a focus on goods movement. The third workshop will be held on October 4th at the SCAG office in downtown L.A. The focus of the workshop will be the growth scenario and will also include a session on SCAG's Regional Comprehensive Plan. The fourth workshop will be held on October 18th in Ontario with a focus on airport ground access and high speed rail. The fifth workshop will be a wrap-up session and will be held on October 25th in Anaheim.

Staff hopes to bring the draft RTP to the Regional Council in February 2008 for adoption.

Jonathan Nadler, SCAG, added that in terms of the attainment demonstration the South Coast AQMD, the South Coast Air Basin, is a PM2.5 non-attainment area. This is the only area in the SCAG region that is non-attainment. The AQMD strategy in putting forward an AQMP to be submitted to ARB was to a combined PM2.5 and ozone strategy. Having done that there was a certain amount of NOx reductions that were unidentified in terms of attaining the PM2.5 standard. The AQMD had suggested to ARB certain measures for ARB's adoption to cover the shortfall. There is a September 27th ARB hearing on the State Strategy and the South Coast air plan for ozone and PM2.5.

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Jean Mazur, FHWA, stated that the FHWA would be more comfortable if the timely implementation report came with the RTP and the same one can be used for the new '08 TIP. Jonathan Nadler stated that staff would take that into consideration.

4.2 RTIP Update

John Asuncion, SCAG, informed the committee that staff was currently analyzing RTIP Amendment #10 submittals. Staff anticipates submitting Amendment #10 to Caltrans by mid-September. Staff then anticipates State approval in October, and federal approval by November.

Rosemary Ayala, SCAG, stated that staff anticipates getting the existing amendment out in September and there should be time for a smaller type amendment prior to receiving the 2008 County TIPS in early December. After that the region would then go into emergency amendment basis so the region does not lapse any funds or delay any project implementation at the various levels that require an amendment.

On October 4th, staff will request that the TCC recommend Regional Council approval of the final 2008 RTIP Guidelines.

Jonathan Nadler stated that in regards to the TIP Guidelines, the committee had previously requested that there be some type of clarity regarding requirements for modeling. Staff has been attempting to get agreement on definitions and modeling guidelines so that there is consistency among the various agencies staff who work on these projects such that we do not run into problems with the federal approval at the last minute. Part of the issue is that there may be different definitions regarding projects being used by someone who is considering conformity as compared to someone who is programming the project. Some examples of projects being considered are arterial gap closure, gap widening, extend arterial right turn lanes, extended entry/exit ramp, accelerate/de-acceleration lanes, mainline ancillary lanes, HOV preferential lane on entry ramps, and adding lanes on ramps.

Ken Lobeck, RCTC, stated that as part of the environmental sign-off there is the conformity sign-off portion. The review of that is looking for consistency between the RTIP and the project report in description and

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modeling details. What has not been provided in the past is verification of what is actually modeled and how was it modeled.

Jonathan Nadler stated that staff would like to see guidance on this issue in the RTIP Guidelines. Worst case scenario, however, is that the guidance could be in another paper. Since there is still the opportunity to get the guidance into the RTIP, staff will continue the discussion with the TCWG.

Jean Mazur felt it would be beneficial to put something in writing for review. Jonathan Nadler stated that the information will be written up and brought back to the group.

4.3 NEPA Delegation

Cindy Adams, Caltrans, described NEPA delegation set forth in SAFETEA-LU relative to conformity.

In general, Section 6004: State Assumption of Responsibility for Categorical Exclusions (CE), assigns the State responsibility for determining whether certain designated activities are categorically excluded from requirements for environmental assessments or environmental impact statements. Where there are CE's that are assigned under Section 6004, Caltrans is assuming responsibility for air quality conformity determination.

Under Section 6005: Surface Transportation Project Delivery Pilot Program, Caltrans is assigned the responsibilities for environmental review, consultation, or other actions pertaining to the review or approval of a specific project, but is not assigned the responsibility for conformity determinations. FHWA will continue to make air quality determinations for 6005 projects.

FHWA sent a letter to Caltrans in June which describes the information that they need to receive in order to make a conformity determination. Caltrans is currently in the process of working out in practice how it will be getting out information back and forth to FHWA. Caltrans is also in the middle of putting together an annotated outline of conformity information. Caltrans is still working with the districts to have them identify their points of contract

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for project level air quality conformity as opposed to regional air quality conformity.

Jean Mazur, FHWA, reminded the TCWG that FHWA is asking that the formal request for the conformity determinations for 6005 projects come through Caltrans local assistance rather than the project sponsors sending them directly to FHWA.

4.4 Review of Qualitative PM Hot Spot Analysis

Mid-County Parkway: RIV031218

Jean Mazur, FHWA, was primarily concerned with the vehicle threshold. The report quantified a 10,000 vehicle threshold, which she stated was an incorrect value.

Additionally, Ms. Mazur was concerned with the location of the monitoring stations. Mr. Lay stated that there were 2-3 monitors in the 32 miles of the project area. There is no real monitor that is adjacent to a similar facility that can be found in the area. The monitoring locations that do exist in the area currently exceed the threshold. Three separate stations were reported in the study; however, only two were used for each of the pollutants. For PM_{2.5} those were the Riverside-Rubidoux and the Riverside-Magnolia stations. The PM_{2.5} were exceeded in all years for both those stations, but based on predicted future concentrations from the data it shows that the PM_{2.5} concentrations should be met in the area by 2011. For PM₁₀, the stations in the area are Riverside-Rubidoux and the Perris stations. There have been no exceedance reports for the national 24-hour standard in the last 6 years.

Ms. Mazur stated that she would expect to see in the study what transportation facility is closest, how close it is to the monitors, and what the ADT in that facility is to support that these are the monitors that are most representative of the project as built.

Mr. Lay stated that within the study on page 29, under the data considered, it was stated that the monitoring stations are located in Riverside County

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within the vicinity of state Route 60, state Route 91 and I-215, so they are adjacent to fairly large facilities with high truck traffic volumes. The facility will not be a major truck facility; it is primarily a commute facility. The truck volumes will be less than 5% so the concentrations from the facility should be less than what is projected from the monitoring stations. But there are no stations in the Riverside County area that would be adjacent to a similar facility.

Mr. Lay stated that the road network in the area will be operating at a very poor level of service. It is operating from a C-F at the majority of the intersections in the project area. With the project that will improve to A-D. The traffic will flow a lot better in the area it will just be concentrated on one facility instead of multiple facilities.

Mike Brady stated that there was a situation that without the project there is very high emissions from the surrounding road network because there is a very poor level of service. With the project there will be more traffic with the total system but it should be operating better. The question is, will this result in lower emissions within the nearby corridor? How much traffic is being taken off the parallel streets? Given this, do we develop an analysis that supports the conclusion that the project will not make the situation worse overall.

Cathy Bechtel, RCTC, stated that the administrative draft was currently being worked on and parts of it are being reviewed by Caltrans and the other federal agencies. RCTC will continue working with all the partner agencies on finalizing the draft and plan to release the draft environmental document out for public review in January 2008.

The TCWG acknowledged that the final determination of the adequacy of this analysis could not be made today without the input of EPA.

Regarding Rancho Road, SBD031276, it was determined that the analysis provided was intended to be background material for the PM hot spot form submitted for this month's review; it was not intended to be a qualitative analysis.

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Mr. Lay inquired if the two projects, ORA120316 and SBD35556, that had been brought up at the last meeting of the TCWG were reviewed by Caltrans and EPA but not FHWA and are listed as pending in the meeting minutes posted on SCAG's website.

Tony Louka stated that he had contacted Jean Mazur, FHWA, and asked her not to approve.

Jean Mazur stated that she would check on ORA120316.

4.5 Review of PM Hot Spot Interagency Review Forms

Ranchero Road, SBD031276

Jonathan Nadler, SCAG, announced that because of the lack of representation by the EPA at today's meeting, the PM Hot Spot reviews determined today will be tentative pending review and determination by EPA:

Matt Jones, Mestre Greve Associates, stated that his agency originally did the analysis before the most recent PM10 Guidance came out. The report was a review of the project and was supposed to be attached to the form. What is in the report analysis is the old UC Davis protocol. There is a 50 page backup to the inter-agency review form.

Tony Louka, Caltrans, added that the qualitative assessment was done on the old method and the new report reflects the new method and deems it not a project of air quality concern. Nor is there any change in the project that was covered the older UC Davis study and the new study, it is the same project.

Mike Brady, Caltrans, stated that the issue with the review is on the form, it has no ADT information. It is all done in terms of level of service and peak hour delay which is not particularly relevant to the decision.

Jonathan Nadler then stressed the importance that the project sponsors who submit the review forms to SCAG look for the basic information, because if the basic information is not on the form staff will have trouble processing it.

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Mike Brady then stated that if the study was done before March 2006 the committee should be able to say that the old procedure holds and go forward with it as long as there are no changes to the project.

Jonathan Nadler requested that Tony Louka forward to Mike Brady and Jean Mazur the ADT because the data needed to be documented.

4.6 AQMP Update

Eyvonne Sells, AQMD, stated that the South Coast AQMP was discussed earlier on in the discussions and there was nothing more new to report.

Ben Cacatian, Ventura County, stated that it is still waiting for its modeling and attainment demonstration that ARB is working on that though they have not given any indication of when it will be completed. SCAG has been working with ARB and the air districts for Ventura County and Mojave and Antelope relative to the emission budgets. Ventura has not heard if the ARB is requesting any additional information from SCAG on the conformity budgets. Dennis Wade, ARB, responded that the agency was going to put a call into SCAG this afternoon to talk about the budgets.

Last month it was reported that Ventura was anticipating the October Board meeting to adopt their AQMP, but it appears that there will not be a Board meeting in October. Consequently, it looks like adoption would take place at the earliest in November. This also depends if the modeling will be completed for the plan. It was also reported last month that Ventura was looking at Severe 15 ozone designation. It appears to be up in the air again between Severe 15 and Serious classifications which should be clearer as the modeling gets completed.

Jonathan Nadler stated that Antelope and Mojave were in the same circumstance in terms of ARB assisting them in putting together the plan. For Mojave/Antelope the South Coast Air Basin is a major factor considering the transport of emissions there from the South Coast. Mojave's plan will likely come along once the South Coast plan is adopted.

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Jonathan Nadler also reported on the Goods Movement Control Measures that have been in discussion. SCAG is working with the commissions and others on any potential measures or strategies that could be brought forward in both short and long term to help the region move to attainment with both PM2.5 and 8 HR Ozone. The MTA brought an item to its board updating them on where the process is at and requesting that SCAG works closely with the MTA. RCTC brought similar item to their board.

4.7 Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP)

Warren Whiteaker, SCAG, stated that the RCP presents a vision of how the six counties within the SCAG region can balance resource conservation, economic vitality, and quality of life. It lays plan for framework for achieving sustainability in the following nine areas. The areas are: economy, air quality, energy, land use and housing, open space and habitat, security and emergency preparedness, solid waste, transportation, and water. The RCP demonstrates how growth and infrastructure challenges can be approached comprehensively by building off the growth management framework of the Compass Blueprint efforts as well as other smart growth efforts that are going on throughout the region.

The RCP will spell out measurable targets that can be used to gauge the region's progress for reaching sustainability. Additionally, it a focus on getting the best policies and practices that will get the region the best end result for its money.

Through it is non-binding recommendation, the RCP calls on federal, state, regional, local governments, conservations organizations, developers and other stakeholders to begin a regional dialog that will lead to coordinated action. SCAG is especially suited for working on sustainability policies that require local consent and cooperation as its role as a council of governments as well as from an MPO perspective.

The RCP is on the same schedule as the RTP with a draft being released in November. This will complete a three year process to develop the plan. The plan going forward is that the RCP and the RTP get updated on a regular four-year cycle building off the SAFETEA-LU additional time period.

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5.0 CHAIR'S REPORT

No new items to report.

6.0 INFORMATION SHARING

Jonathan Nadler announced that SCAG would hold an Environmental Justice Workshop in the near future and would advise the TCWG of the details.

7.0 ADJOURNMENT

Chair McAllester adjourned the meeting at 11:55 a.m.

**The next Transportation Conformity Working Group meeting will be held on
Tuesday, September 25, 2007 at the SCAG office in Los Angeles.**